The Opelousas Journal.

SEPTEMBER 11. 1869. {Page 1}

THE WIDOW'S YOUNG SUITOR.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

——A specious fair-faced villain,
A threadbare actor, and a fortune hunter.

Emma Hartsworth was a widow. She had been, for long years. Although near fifty years old, she was still youthful-looking, handsome, and well calculated to win the hearts of all.

The one particular object of her care was the orphan daughter of a distant relative, Isabel Irvin, a beautiful, gentle girl of twenty, whom report said, if not engaged, was very well pleased with the ardent admiration and devoted attentions of George Armstead, a thriving young merchant.

Affairs were progressing favorably, and promised a successful ending of young Armstead's wooing, when there came into the neighborhood an artist, Lucian Charlton, to describe whom I must quote Isabel's words:

"Oh, Aunty, you must see him! He is *so* handsome! Such eyes! And his forehead, so broad, high, and fair—a real poet's brow, Aunty! But his greatest attraction is his charming melancholy! He is alone in the world, he says; 'no one to love,' and none to love him! Heigho! I wish I'd never met him—or did not know George quite so well.

"Oh, Isabel! only a few weeks since I heard you going into ectasies over George's *clear*, honest brown eyes, and his cheerful, merry disposition. I fear you are inclined to be a little fickle."

"No, Aunty, not fickle. I still admire George's eyes, and like *him* very much too He is a *really* good, whole-souled fellow. But—well, he is so matter of fact, commonplace, and only seems to care for his business".

"And my ungrateful little Isabel," said Mrs. Hartsworth.

"Yes, a little, I believe," answered Isabel.

Mrs. Hartsworth had been confined by illness several days to her room, and did not see the young artist until he had made a very decided impression on Isabel's heart.

As Isabel had predicted, her aunt was decidedly very favorably inclined towarde the "poor lonely boy," as that lady thought and spoke of him

Almost every day found him with Isabel. At length Mrs. Hartsworth ventured to remonstrate with her.

"Aunty, I cannot help it ; I do like him very much. George has never told me he loves me ; but I must admit I believe he truely does. Lucian *has*. many times ; and although I have not confessed that I returned his love, I have given him encouragement sufficient to induce him to think I am not indifferent towards him."

"Well my child, I am very sorry for George. I believe he is every way worthy of you and I would have willingly given you to him, feeling confident of securing your happiness; but if your affections are won by this young stranger, I will not try to influence you. This is a matter for your own heart to decide. I will watch young Charlton, and if I find him worthy, I will care for him as my own son. But not a word of *this* to any one, Isabel. We are talking in strict confidence."

A few weeks more passed by, and friends began to wonder which it was that young Charlton was trying to win: Mrs. Hartsworth or Isabel. Certainly most of his time was spent by the side of his kind hostess.

"How grateful he is! It is pleasant to have one's friendship and kindness appreciated, as by this poor boy! I really think he loves me as he would his mother. Well, I'll wait a little while longer, and then I will give him a *reason* to be grateful," thought Mrs. Hartsworth.

Isabel was growing uneasy. She thought Lucian could appreciate her aunt's kindness just as much without spending nearly all his time with her. So she set herself to work to punish him, by a marked kindness towards George Armstead again. But so intent was her artist lover in showing his *gratitude*, that he failed to notice George regaining his old position. Isabel beheld herself completely "cut out," as it seemed.

Charlton begged to be allowed to paint the picture of Mrs. Hartsworth; and while at work on it, many times he would break forth into exclamations of admiration, and address her in terms of endearment.

In the mean time Isabel was consoling herself in the society of her *former* lover; and George, so much delighted at her return of favor, was more agreeable and entertaining than ever.

The potrait was nearly finished—it was the last sitting—when Charlton suddenly threw down his brushes, and throwing himself at the feet of the sitter, clasping her hands, exclaimed:

"I *must* speak. I can endure this suspense no longer! Mrs. Hartsworth; Emma, dearest! I love you!!"

Unconcious of his real meaning, she answered:

"I *know* you do! And I love you, almost as if you were my very own boy!"

"Boy! You do not, or *will* not, understand me. I am no boy. I love you as a man loves the woman he would make his wife!" he said.

Deathly pale she turned, nor uttered forth one word.

Again he essayed to speak, but she said.:

"Hush! no more now. To-morrow I will see you!" and she waved him adieu.

Long she sat and thought. "Oh, how blind she had been! And how that presumptuous boy had mistaken, misconstrued her motherly kindness." Indignation followed surprise. "How dared he woo her, after seeking Isabel's love? and she old enough to be his mother! How must he think of her? Not with love, or even respect! *Could it be for money?*"

The next day he came. Mrs. Hartsworth was about to dismiss him, when the door of the bird-cage flew suddenly open, and a valuable canary flew through the open window and alighted on a rose bush in the garden.

Charlton hastened to recover it. Some time elapsed before he succeeded and and returned to the room, to find a change had come o'er his lady love.

His hopes, so crushed a few moments before, were not only revived, but crowned with success.

"Lucian, I truly believe you are in earnest about this wooing. I have already told you I loved you! We are both lonely Isabel will not be with me always She seems thinking of leaving me even now. Notwithstanding your treatment, she seeems very well reconciled in the society of Armstead. Go, attend to your arragements, and return here in one month from to-day, and we will have a quiet little wedding. And if you will *travel* afterwards, very well. I shall not object."

Charlton was of course overjoyed

The month flew rapidly past, and the wedding day arrived, bringing with it the exultant young artist.

He chided Emma for her seeming sadness.

'Can you wonder at it, Lucian? Have you no doubts for the future?" she asked.

"None whatever, dearest! *You* are going to reward my ardent love to-day—for which I will return a life's devotion," he said, gallantly kissing her hand.

"Yes, I shall reward you *justly*, I truly believe she answered, earnestly.

The hour for the marriage came. They stood before the reverend man of God. Only two old and intimate friends of Emma's were present

Solemnly came the words of the service. Charlton's response was clearly audible, but when, in return, Emma was asked, "Wilt thou take this man to be thy wedded husband?" and so on, no word came from her compressed lips. The minister waited. Slowly drawing forth a *silken purse filled with gold*, she held it up Deep silence prevailed. Intense astonishment was pictured on every face. A few seconds she held it up, and then, speaking in clear, distinct tones, she said:

"This will not answer; it is mute;

it cannot!"

"What means this, Emma?" asked the expectant bridegroom and minister, simultaneously.

"Simply *the truth*. 'Twas *gold* that this man wished to wed Go! You *have received your just reward*," she said, turning to the miserable Charlton, who was overwhelmed with supprise, mortification, and disappointment. "*You* shall not be disappointed dear friend. Isabel wishes you to wait an hour or so, and, with more of our friends who will soon be here, witness her marriage, and give us the pleasure of your company at her reception immediately after. You my dear pastor, of course will perform the ceremony"

"Emma, have you done well? Are you *certain* respecting this young man's affections?" asked the minister, gravely.

"Perfectly. Read that," she said, placing the following note in his hand:

"DEAR LUCIAN—I received your

note. Hurry up with your wooing. I am sadly in need of the money. You were wise to drop the young one. when you found out the worth of the other.

It will take a *heavy* purse to *lighten* the weight of your debts.

"Yours with empty pockets, SAM.

This was proof positive. The note was received by Lucian Charlton the next morning, with a few lines from Mrs. Hartsworth, saying:

"The enclosed was placed in my hand by my faithful little Fido, who, with the mischievousness—or *sagacity*, which ?—of his race, must have drawn it from your pocket the day you went out recovering my bird."

"Confusion!" he exclaimed. "But for this I might have returned to Isabel, and managed to have won her. I really like her better than any girl I ever knew. Truly here is a variation of the old adage, and something worse; for by catching *a bird in the bush*, I lost *two* in hand.

Wesley's Exchange of the Written for the Unwritten Sermon.—John Wesley at first wrote and read his sermons. His conversion from this practice he described to a friend as follows "It is fifty years, sir, since I first preached in this church. I remember it from a peculiar circumstance that occurred at that time. "I came without a sermon, and going up the pulpit stairs I hesitated, and returned into the vestry under much mental confusion and agitation. A woman who was there noticed that I was deeply agitated, and she inquired: 'Pray, sir, what is the matter with you?' 'I replied, 'I have not brought a sermon with me.' Putting her hand upon my shoulder, she said. 'Is that all? Cannot you trust God for a sermon?' That question had such an effect upon me that I ascended the pulpit and preached extempore, with great freedom to myself and acceptance to the people, and I have never since taken a written sermon into the pulpit."

An irascible gentlemen lately fought a duel with his intimate friend because he jocosely asserted that he was born without a shirt to his back.